

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and all prior versions, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing an epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating by use of a kneader provided with a suction hole on the downstream side of a kneading region in a conveying direction of the epoxy resin composition, and being provided with a supply orifice and a discharge orifice respectively disposed on the upstream side and the downstream side in the conveying direction of the epoxy resin composition, wherein the kneading region is from the downstream side of the supply orifice to the upstream side of the discharge orifice, the method comprising:

kneading the epoxy resin composition, while discharging a volatile gas in the kneader out of the kneader through the suction hole, and simultaneously introducing outside air to the kneader through the supply orifice and the discharge orifice.

2. (Original) The method of manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 1, wherein a quantity of the gas to be discharged from the kneader is in the range of 3 to 60 m³/h, and the quantity of the outside air to be introduced through the supply orifice is in the range of 0.1 to 2 m³/h.

3.-11. (Cancelled).

12. (New) The method of manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 1, wherein the kneader further includes suction means connected to the suction hole, for discharging the volatile gas in the kneader out of the kneader through the suction hole, while simultaneously introducing outside air to the kneader through the supply orifice and the discharge orifice, and wherein in said method said volatile gas is discharged through the suction hole while simultaneously introducing outside air through the supply orifice and the discharge orifice, by operation of the suction means.

13. (New) The method of manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 1, wherein the kneader includes a first axial member conveying the kneaded material in the kneading region and a second axial member conveying the kneaded material in a reverse direction to the conveying direction at a downstream side of the discharge orifice in the conveying direction.

14. (New) The method of manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 1, wherein the kneader includes a wall member surrounding the kneading region and a region downstream of the kneading region, in the conveying direction, said wall member including an end wall at an end of said region downstream of the kneading region in the conveying direction, and the suction hole is provided in the end wall.

15. (New) An apparatus for manufacturing an epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating, which comprises:

a supply orifice disposed on an upstream side in the conveying direction of a kneaded material,

a discharge orifice disposed on a downstream side in said conveying direction,

an axial member for conveying a kneaded material from the supply orifice to the discharge orifice while kneading,

an inner wall provided around the axial member, and forming a space inside as a kneading section,

a suction hole provided on the downstream side of a kneading region in the conveying direction of the kneaded material, wherein the kneading region is from the downstream side of a supply orifice to the upstream side of the discharge orifice, and

a suction means provided connecting to the suction hole, for discharging a volatile gas in the kneader out of the kneader through the suction hole, while simultaneously introducing outside air to the kneader through the supply orifice and the discharge orifice.

16. (New) The apparatus for manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 15, wherein the supply orifice and the suction hole are provided such that a quantity of the gas to be discharged from the kneader through the suction hole is in the range of 3 to 60 m³/h, and the quantity of the outside air to be introduced through the supply orifice is in the range of 0.1 to 2 m³/h.

17. (New) An apparatus for manufacturing an epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating, comprising a kneader provided with a suction hole on

the downstream side of a kneading region in a conveying direction of the epoxy resin composition, and a supply orifice and a discharge orifice respectively disposed on an upstream side and the downstream side in the conveying direction of the epoxy resin composition, the supply orifice, discharge orifice and suction hole being provided such that in kneading the epoxy resin composition in the apparatus, a volatile gas in the kneader is discharged out of the kneader through the suction hole, and outside air is simultaneously introduced to the kneader through the supply orifice and the discharge orifice.

18. (New) The apparatus for manufacturing the epoxy resin composition for semiconductor encapsulating according to claim 17, wherein the supply orifice and the suction hole are provided such that a quantity of the gas to be discharged from the kneader through the suction hole is in the range of 3 to 60 m³/h, and the quantity of the outside air to be introduced through the supply orifice is in the range of 0.1 to 2 m³/h.